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THOUGHTS

ON THE

Ackworth Centennial,

1879.

by Gulielma Baker &
S. A. Lingford.

HUDDERSFIELD:

J. E. WHEATLEY AND CO., PRINTERS, NEW-STREET.

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THOUGHTS ON THE

Ackworth Centennial,

1879.

SAY, why does such festival gladness
Surround Alma Mater to-day?
Why, crowding within and around her,
Are the wise, and the grave, and the gay.

Grey seniors with bright groups of children
In the days of their life's merry spring,
Till alive are her sunshine and shadow,
Till crowded her Centre and Wing?

To honour the work and the workers
Of the Century now at its close,
With the fatherly care and the wisdom
This sheltering garden that chose.

Where grandsires and fathers and children
Have ciphered and parsed in their turn,
And the next generation are sitting
Where *they* sat their lessons to learn.

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Thro' our country and kingdom and nation
Her influence thus has been felt,
To our colonies far away reaching
Wherever her children have dwelt.

And these have remembered the teachings
Of many who toiled with them here,
Of the Master whose able controlling
E'en the rebels were bound to revere.

How oft in the solemn assembly
He pleaded and prayed with us all;
How gentle in sorrow and sickness,
How kind to the weak and the small.

And Governess, cherished for ever
Be the thought of her motherly care,
She is gone where she hears not our blessings,
But they rise up and follow her there.

The teachers whose intellect brightened
Each lesson, and made it a joy,
The free gladsome life on the playground,
So dear to each school-girl and boy.

The daily delight of our gardens
Where each for pre-eminence strove,
The walk on the flags with our kindred,
The midsummer groups in the grove.

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The trees that so long have stood witness,
Where brothers and sisters embraced,
Have taken the kindly infection
And stand with their arms interlaced.

There comes up no thought but of kindness
Across this long vista of years,
There may have been grumbling and blindness,
I know there were passionate tears.

Yet Ackworth, beloved is thy dwelling
For the blessings that crowded the past,
For the friendships so true and so trusting,
How many now proved to the last.

For the good men and true hearted women
That from hence have gone out to the world,
Who have helped on the war against evil,
And the banner of freedom unfurled ;

Who have borne out in public and private
The principles Ackworth instilled,
And spread to still widening circles
The light which their spirits had filled.

And she has been granted the glory
In her sons a true leader to see,
Who can speak before listening thousands,
Unlocking their hearts like a key.

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In the hearts of her children this moment
Still foremost of schools does she stand,
Her garden, a garden of roses,
Her children a joy in the land.

On the shoulders that bend to her burdens
May the oil of anointing be poured,
And, from oldest to youngest, her people
Grow strong in the joy of the Lord.

My words may seem all retrospective
To the young hearts that gather to-day,
While I feel their bright looks and their gladness
Are dearer than language can say.

We would not have morning o'erclouded
By the knowledge that night cometh soon,
But we know it can not be far distant
For those who have reached afternoon.

And chide not the hearts that are turning
E'en now to their far scattered graves,
Some young heads laid down in the morning,
Some sunk neath the pitiless waves.

How many fell meekly beside us,
Borne down with the toils of the way,
And others like corn fully ripened
Were garnered at closing of day.

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Dear heads that are whitening and whitened,
May we too at even find light,
That shall be to us beauty and gladness,
And songs in the hush of the night.

Let a comrade both laggard and halting
Say to those who have marched in the van,
Who have laboured and yet have not fainted,
Hold on to the end of your span.

In faith, love and patience relying
On the Hand that has guided the past,
And e'en in the Valley of Shadow,
No fear shall assail at the last!

Take heart, ye who bravely are bearing
The burden and heat of the day,
There is many a light on the journey,
And a prize at the end of the way.

Amid life's hurried train catching fever,
Find time to consult with your Guide,
And amid all its whirl and confusion
He will lovingly watch at your side.

Dear Mothers, still watch ever praying
Over those ye so tenderly love,
The answer that seems long delaying
E'en now is recorded above.

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Little children, abide in his keeping,
His shepherds and servants obey,
And when the Good Shepherd appeareth,
Ye shall know neither shame nor dismay.

Young brows, o'er whom breezes of morning
Wave dark tresses, auburn, or gold,
The world may look lovely before you,
But keep within guard of the fold.

Be true to the youthful aspirings,
That have hallowed this place in your heart,
And the light that has dawned on your childhood
Will ne'er from your spirits depart.

Dear teachers, though thankless and weary
Your labour may oftentimes be,
He will some day send fruit for your toiling,
Who says, "it is done unto Me!"

Still gather the Lambs to the Saviour
And tell of the glories above,
Teach them nought is so good as His favour,
Or so grand as His wonderful Love.

Teach them war is abhorred by the Master,
That all tribes of mankind are akin,
That no glory is real or lasting
But the glory of working for Him.

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That all places are safe where He guideth,
Else, danger encompassed and dim,
And he only in love who abideth
Rejoicingly dwelleth in Him.

He knoweth His own, and they follow
In faith through the narrowest turn,
While bitter and hard are the lessons
He gives His best scholars to learn.

We have all turned aside on our journey,
Oft forgetting our tenderest Friend,
But the souls that have bent to such training
Will not be cast out in the end.

And we claim from the young generation,
Who are arming to-day for the fight,
That they should go on with the struggle,
For the Good and the True and the Right.

And when the long roll is read over,
And the nations are gathered in fear,
Though some must be saved as by fire,
May each name on its columns appear.

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